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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002534

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KN](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: ABDUCTIONS: MOFA NOT COUNTING ON A DPRK RESPONSE
SOON

Classified By: DCM James P. Zumwalt per 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Soon after Prime Minister Fukuda's sudden resignation announcement on September 1, the DPRK informed the Japanese that it will delay standing up its abductions reinvestigation committee until after it "can confirm the policy of the new Japanese administration," Foreign Minister Koumura announced on September 5. (Note: The Japanese had hoped that the DPRK would launch the reinvestigation sometime before September 9 -- the 60th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK -- to allow North Koreans resident in Japan to travel to Pyongyang for the festivities once Japan took the agreed to step of lifting the ban on charter flights and travel between the two countries.)

¶2. (C) The election of a new ruling Liberal Democratic Party president on September 22, followed by this person's election to Prime Minister on or around September 24, will probably not immediately open the door for the DPRK to restart the abductions investigation, MOFA Northeast Asia Director Shigeo Yamada told Embassy Tokyo September 16. In fact, with the possibility of an October or early November general election in the offing, the DPRK will likely hold off until the election is over and it can determine what course Japan's new administration will take. "This will probably take time," Yamada assessed.

¶3. (C) In the meantime, abductee family members have been harshly critical of PM Fukuda for further delaying possible abductions progress with his resignation announcement. During a highly publicized gathering of abductee family members September 15, Megumi Yokota's parents and others slammed PM Fukuda for his irresponsible actions -- particularly after he pledged upon taking office last year that he would resolve the abductions issue "with his own hands" -- and called on the next PM to make the issue a priority.
SCHIEFFER